

**The University of Western Ontario**  
**Department of French Studies**  
***French 3140B/ ARTHUM 3392G Syllabus***  
**Winter-Spring 2022**  
**Rwanda: Culture, Society and Reconstruction**

**Instructor:** *Henri Boyi*  
**Office Hours:** *Tuesdays: 10:30 – 11:30 am & 12:30 – 2:30 pm.*  
*Or by appointment.*  
**Email:** *hboyi@uwo.ca*  
**Course Hours:** *Mondays, 3:30 – 6:30 pm*

**Course Description:**

This is an interdisciplinary Experiential Learning Course on Rwanda, based in the Department of French Studies and SASAH. It provides students with an opportunity to learn about Rwandan society, and about themselves by engaging in an international social and cultural setting. The readings for the course will focus on issues related to Community Service Learning and the history and culture of Rwanda. The course will offer an in-depth look at a number of contemporary social issues that are common in Rwanda and in the African Great Lakes region in general. Special global topics such as Community Engaged Learning, intercultural Competence, Cross-cultural communication, Global Citizenship, leadership and Teamwork, and the Rwandan Genocide will be central to class discussions.

This year, we will go to Rwanda in May of 2022 unless the University imposes new traveling restrictions. If that is the case, we will work virtually with our Rwandan partners and their local NGOs. We will also look for opportunities to work with local community-based organizations.

**Course Objectives:**

- to learn about the history, culture and people of Rwanda, with an emphasis on the Rwandan genocide and other genocides.
- to give students an opportunity to reflect on a globalizing world and a wide range of international issues
- to offer opportunities for students to learn about the theory and practice of Community Engaged Learning and Intercultural Competence
- to increase students' clear understanding of the current needs of global communities
- to develop and solidify leadership skills and global citizenship

## **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course students will:

- be familiar with various aspects of Rwandan history, culture and society
- understand the nature of the Rwandan genocide from multiple perspectives and how the country has been dealing with the aftermath of the tragedy
- be aware of cultural and personal biases towards groups, places and events and how to address and overcome them
- have added value to personal and academic growth by sharing thoughts, opinions and feelings through insightful and supportive group reflections
- have developed and built upon their knowledge skills and the personal values necessary to become true global citizens and leaders

## **Evaluation:**

1. Written Essay:	15%
2. Written Essay:	15%
3. Participation	20%
4. Presentation:	10%
5. Final Project:	40%

### **First Written Essay (15%):**

Students are to write a 1000-word paper on a) a topic related to an area of the assigned readings on Service-Learning, b) either of the documentaries or c) a topic related to Rwandan history, society and culture as long as it is approved by the professor. This will be due on Monday February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 via email.

### **Second Written Essay (15%):**

This essay will be based on class project activities that will take place throughout the course. A written report and a poster presentation will be submitted to complete this assignment. The assignment will be due Monday, March 21<sup>st</sup> 2022, via email.

### **Participation (20%):**

This component of the course will take into account, students' participation in class activities (including discussions) and their engagement in placement sites. This will require our own accountability towards our partners, as well. Class attendance and participation at placement sites is mandatory. Each unjustified absence will result in the loss of 10% of the overall participation mark. Arriving to class late (15 minutes after the start of class) or leaving class early (15 minutes prior to the end of class) will result in an absence unless justified.

## Oral Presentations (10%):

Individually or in small groups of two, students will present on the weekly readings to the class and facilitate discussion. Presentations will take about 30 minutes for a group of two, and 15 minutes for individual presentations. They will be based on our readings for the course. Highlight the main points of the readings providing clarification where necessary, but also adding a critical view on some of those main points. Prepare some discussion questions that you feel are relevant to the topic.

## Final Project (40%):

There will be no final exam for this course. The final project will be due a week before the end of classes in April. This work will be based on a reflection on important issues that will have been discussed in the course; the 3000-word reflection will also have to be supported by theories from Deardorff, Bennet, and Kolb among the major ones, and on your experience including but not limited to lessons learnt.

## Weekly Schedule

Monday of	Topic	Homework
January 3	Course introduction	-Read the syllabus
January 10	- <i>Ubuntu</i> as an African Philosophical Concept -Discussion: ' <i>I Am Because We Are</i> '	Shake Hands with the Devil (Documentary)
January 17	-Highlights on Experiential Learning -Shake Hands with the Devil (class discussion)	
January 24	Service-learning for Health  Stevens, Cheryl A. <i>Service-Learning for Health, Physical Education and Recreation</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li></ul> Jacoby, Barbara et al. <i>Building Partnerships for Service-Learning</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ch. 14 - Civic Renewal</li></ul>	<i>Reading: 'Different Ways to Reflect and Learn'</i>  Oral Presentations
January 31	Intercultural Competence: The Deardorff Theoretical Model	Readings and Oral Presentation

February 7	<b>Class Project on Equity and Inclusion</b>	Watch TED Talks: - <i>The Danger of a Single Story</i> - <i>Shut up and listen!</i>
February 14	Reading and Workshop on Decolonizing Learning  Race and Colonization	Ngugi's <i>Decolonizing the Mind</i>  Aimé Césaire's <i>Discourse on Colonialism</i>  <b>Written Essay Due</b>
<b>February 21-25</b>	<b><i>Reading Week</i></b>	
February 28	Social reconstruction / transitional justice  Quinn, Joanna. Social Reconstruction in Uganda  Semujanga, Josias. <i>Origins of Rwandan Genocide</i> • Ch. 6: And the Humanitarian Watched .....	Readings and Oral Presentation
March 7	<b>Class Project on Cultural Integration</b>	Documentary: My Neighbor, My Killer
March 14	A Thousand Hills • Kinzer, Stephen. <i>A Thousand Hills</i> . • Ch. 15: Breathless with Fear	Readings and Oral Presentation
March 21	Women's Empowerment in Rwanda	<b>Essay #2 due</b>

March 28	Reconstruction: Post-Genocide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mamdani, Mahmood. <i>When Victims Become Killers</i> :</li> <li>• Conclusion: Political Reform After Genocide</li> </ul>	Readings and Oral Presentation
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**Required Readings :**

- **Compiled copy at Western bookstore.**
- **Other readings will be indicated through the term.**

**References**

- Carr, Rosamond, and Howard Halsey. *Land of a Thousand Hills*. New York : Plume, 2000. P. 222-235. Print.
- Dallaire, Romeo. *Shake Hands With the Devil*. Toronto : Vintage Canada, 2003. P. 510-522.
- Deardorff, Darla. “Intercultural Competence: A Definition, Model and Implications for Education Abroad.” In *Developing Intercultural Competence and Transformation: Theory, Research, and Application in International Education*, ed. Victor Savicki. pp. 32-52. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Hatcher, J. A., Bringle, R.G., & Muthiah, R. (2004) Designing effective reflection: What matters to service-learning? *Michigan journal of Community Service Learning*. 38-46.
- International forum on the role of leadership in gender equality and women’s empowerment. *Women’s Health and Education*. May 17-18, 2010.
- Jacoby, Barbara et al. *Building Partnerships for Service-Learning*. San Francisco : John Wiley and Sons Inc, 2003. P. 289-313.
- Kinzer, Stephen. *A Thousand Hills*. New Jersey : John Wiley & Sons, 2008. P. 253-280.
- Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Kubayanda, J. B., & Kubayanda, J. B. (1989). ON DISCOURSE OF DECOLONIZATION IN AFRICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. *Dispositio*, 14(36/38), 25–37.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41491353>
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *When Victims Become Killers : Colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda*. New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 2001. P. 264-282.
- Prunier, Gérard. *The Rwanda Crisis : History of a Genocide*. New York : Columbia University Press, 1997. P. 336-355.
- Quinn, Joanna. Social Reconstruction in Uganda: The Role of Customary Mechanisms in Transitional Justice. In *Human Rights Review*: 8: 4 Netherlands: Springer. 2007. 389-407.
- Stevens, Cheryl A. *Service-Learning for Health, Physical Education and Recreation*. Illinois : Human Kinetics, 2008. P. xi-xx.
- Semujanga, Josias. *Origins of Rwandan Genocide*. New York : Humanity Books, 2003. P. 211-240.
- Wa Thiong’o, Ngugi (1986) *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London, Nairobi, Portsmouth, 1986). 26-30.

## **IMPORTANT ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

### **Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:**

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Please note that in all courses offered by the Department of French Studies, this same requirement will also apply to assignments worth less than 10% of the final grade. Final examinations must be written at the scheduled time unless formal alternative arrangements for a Special Examination have been approved (by the instructor, the Department and the Home Faculty Dean’s Office) based on valid documented grounds.

A downloadable Student Medical Certificate can be found here:

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading.

**Support services**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

**Statement on Plagiarism, Cheating and other Scholastic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence in the Academic Handbook available on the Academic Calendar website, here:  
<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg113.html>

**Important Academic Information for Students Taking Courses in the Department of French Studies** [http://www.uwo.ca/french/undergraduate/counselling/academic\\_information/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/french/undergraduate/counselling/academic_information/index.html)

**Testimonials and Photos – Class of 2009**



"My experience in Rwanda is hard to capture in words and I still feel overwhelmed by how much I learned and developed in such a short period of time...Embracing diversity, showing empathy, and bringing out the best in those around me have been critical to my success in my world today."

**-Wiktorina Kagan**

"The best thing that I learned through my experience in the Rwanda program was getting comfortable being uncomfortable, being thrown into different environments different contexts around new people with different languages really encouraged me to get comfortable being outside my comfort zone and that is something that has continued to reap benefits throughout my entire life since the program." **-Juliana Chesterfield**

### **Testimonials and Photos – Class of 2010**

"Of everything we saw between the Belgium memorial, the New Kigali and just the beautiful scenery of green hills, the [Genocide] Memorial for me was the most eye-opening. I had a lump in my throat the entire time and I nearly lost it in the final room, where survivors from the genocide were talking about their parents that they lost and how much they missed them...While this experience was very sad, it also made me very curious as I couldn't understand how Rwandans could extend the kind of forgiveness they had to their fellow neighbours who took away their families." **-Sheila Cassidy**



**FRE 3100B Class of 2010 Dinner Gala with President Kagame**

“Gisimba presented an entirely different learning opportunity, and I believe I learned a lot and grew immensely as a result of spending time helping at the orphanage. The experience of assisting in the classroom allowed me to explore my ability to be patient and flexible, as the ‘baby class’ was a constantly changing and hectic environment. The experience will ultimately help me in any career I choose, as functioning in an environment with the language barriers I faced at Gisimba allowed me to develop my critical thinking skills. On a personal level, at the end of the experience I felt I was able to make a connection with every student in the class, and I will take away many special memories of all of the children I met during my time at Gisimba. I think I made some progress in teaching some English to both the students in my class as well as my teacher, but I think that help cannot compare to the personal growth I experienced as a result of my time at the school and the orphanage.” – **Melyssa Kerr**

“I really enjoyed my second placement at Gisimba Orphanage. I found that once we got into a routine at the school, we were actually able to provide a helpful service. The kids were really wonderful to spend the mornings with. The language barrier was easier to manage because they were trying to learn English. I got to know some of the kids and was able to become close with many of them. By the time I left Gisimba, my class had a good understanding of the English words for insects, fruits, vegetables, water animals, directions, sizes, positions, and they could spell their names.” – **Jesse Gardner**



“From the very beginning, with the warm welcomes we received till the very end and the heartfelt urges to return, the relationships I made with the people I met there taught me more than I could learn in a lifetime of school...By experiencing struggles and problems so unlike those that we face in Canada, our eyes can be opened to new ideas and alternative solutions.” – **Meagan Rust**

**Kwa Gisimba School/Orphanage**



“As much as this wonderful trip was an experiential learning trip about the culture, society, and reconstruction of Rwanda, it also became a trip about forming lifelong friendships with fellow Western students, beyond the classroom. Every part of this trip was unexpected, and yet produced memories that changed the manner in which I view the world and people around me.” – **Diane Tisdall**

**Hope Village Orphanage – Building a Water Tank**

## Testimonials and Photos – Class of 2011



“I approached this experience with an open-mind, ready for the best experience of my life. In that sense, my expectations were met a million times over. What I was no prepared for, however, was the profound impact that occurred when my learning moved from the classroom to the real world... I learned more about myself in those short weeks than I ever have in my life, and I received more from the children in the school and the orphanage in one day that I could ever hope to give them in one week. Their courage, hope, and joy are an inspiration, and the impact that they made on my

life and me is something that I could never repay, and I will never forget that.” — **Elizabeth Dupuis**



“I have struggled to express in words throughout this trip how much this experience had meant to me, and now that it is almost complete it is even more difficult. The people of Rwanda have taught me and given me more that I could ever possibly return. This country and the people I have been so blessed to spend time with will always hold a special place in my heart. A part of me will stay in Rwanda and it will keep me coming back I’m sure”. — **Simran Cahal**

**Students with Director Nicolette at Centre Marembo**

### Testimonials and Photos – Class of 2012



“The opportunity to work alongside passionate teachers and remarkable students at the Gisimba Memorial Centre Nursery School has been inspiring. The Gisimba placement has revealed to us all new experiences, new perspectives and new worlds that have been testaments to the resiliency and virtuousness of the human condition, broadened our horizons to at once penetrate and encompass intercultural differences and have fundamentally given us the extraordinary opportunity to learn and make new friends.” – **Melody Ren**



*The team at the annual Gorilla Naming Ceremony in North Rwanda*

“Watching the students discover Kigali and the Rwandan culture over the course of the five weeks was an absolute gift. Without exception, every student put his or her heart and soul into the work. Seeing them work, grow and develop as they learned was the very definition of ‘reciprocity’ in Service-Learning. Each student has gone above and beyond what was expected of them, and I am very proud of the entire group. They undoubtedly had an impact on the lives of the people we worked alongside of, however the impact that was made on them is something that will last a lifetime as it will with me too. On a far away land, they each and all made Western and Canada shine with respect, integrity and leadership.” – **Tara Dupuis (Assistant)**

**Testimonials and Photos – Class of 2013**



“Through building connections with people from a different culture, I was able to explore my



attitudes, grow in knowledge, and develop more intercultural skills. It was an eye-opening experience that was beyond anything I could ever have imagined. As I saw different ways of life in

another part of the world, I was challenged to experience my emotions in new ways and discover parts of myself that I did not know before. Though challenging, it was the happiest, most humbling, and most fulfilling time of my life. I would not trade it for anything in this world! I cannot thank Rwanda and its people enough for giving me new life by sharing their lives. This experience has forever changed me, and I will cherish it always! I hope to be an ambassador of these lessons by emulating what I have learned from GMC and Rwanda in my life -Kaitlin

### **Testimonials and Photos – Class of 2014**



**The 2014 UWO Team On their way to Lake Kivu**

This experiential learning trip was the most incredible experience. I was able to witness firsthand the vitality and strength of a people who had so recently been overwhelmed with hurt and violence. Within those five short weeks in Rwanda, I encountered more inspirational men and women than I had in my entire life. Being able to work with the Rwandan people for a brighter future has truly allowed my intercultural competence to grow. This experience has eliminated any preconceived notions I had associated with Rwanda because of its past and has therefore allowed me to become a better global citizen. I have been to twenty countries and five continents in my life and

have yet to experience a place so filled with beauty, strength, perseverance and kindness as Rwanda. I am counting down the days until I will return. - **Rachel Goldstein**

**Testimonials and Photos – Class of 2015**



**The 2015 UWO Team in Gisenyi**



**Rachel and Anita teaching a lesson on sexual health at a high school**

As Anita Dabirzadeh said in her final reflection, *“Choosing to embark on this experience was the bravest and most physically and emotionally challenging thing I have ever done.*

*That being said, it was also the most rewarding thing I have ever done.”*

## Testimonials and Photos – Class of 2016



"This community engaged learning course has had a huge impact in shaping who I am, what I'm doing academically and professionally, and really pushed my social awareness as a student, as a teacher, as a community worker, and just as a person in general...Before, during, and after the course there was a lot of reflection involved which has made me a more critical and reflective person and of course when we were there we were working with the same people in Rwanda every day for five weeks, and in my experience that was where the real learning was happening." -**Maxime Purdy Crawford-Holland**

"Learning about Rwanda from Professor Boyi provided a completely different perspective from what I was familiar with...Participating in [this] course did not change my life so much as it helped change my perspective on life. That experience helped me understand as a person who values community and never felt represented by Western curriculums, my purpose is to use the privileges I do have to create space for other people and other ways of knowing that are commonly excluded from narratives of the West...I will be forever grateful for what I learned in Professor Boyi's course." -**Keyona Gallucci**

## Testimonials and Photos – Class of 2019

"The course spent a lot of time learning about the concept of *Ubuntu*, a philosophy of mutual human kindness, which isn't something that any of us could have just studied but was something that we really needed to experience to capture its true meaning." -**Misha Apel (2016 & 2019 TA)**

"I learned a lot from the partners at EDD, especially Gratien who explained that there needs to be a reframing of how we view society to prevent behaviours from repeating themselves. I have been really re-evaluating myself, how effective shame and punishment really are when we should be working together as a community to reach this overall goal of equity and equality." -**Veronica Botnick**



**Centre St. At Paul Hostel: Our second home!**



**A morning at Les Enfants de Dieu!**



**Prof. Isaacs and Natalie at Centre Marembo**



**The 2019 Happy Team at Akagera National Park!!**

### Testimonials and Photos – Class of 2020



“Even though we weren’t able to travel physically to Rwanda due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, I was fortunately able to participate in virtual student exchange sessions with students and faculty of the University of Rwanda where we shared our perspectives about various global issues, such as COVID-19, mental health, media misinformation/disinformation, and social injustice. Exploring the shared humanity of others was a highlight of the course for me, especially when applying it to the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.”

**-Jasmine Wu (2019 & 2020 TA)**

### Testimonial and Exhibition Photos – Class of 2021

This course is extremely special as it is one that stays with you. Running for over 10 years, and even throughout a pandemic which caused it to be completely virtual, the impact has not changed. The values, lessons, and philosophies you learn are from not just Professor Boyi but from your classmates and the individuals you meet along the way. Even though I took the course virtually, it was especially meaningful - engaging with this course made me ask questions and think about myself and the world in a different light that I wouldn’t have otherwise. I realized the importance of community, and thinking about yourself in relation to others rather than as an individual. Alongside gaining intercultural competence, I achieved personal growth. It has been said that this course is magic, and it is true. I have grown fond of Rwanda and fallen in love without visiting, and it is my hope that I will be able to travel and see the Land of a Thousand Hills with my own eyes! **-Tasmin Alam**



# WESTERN'S RWANDA COURSE

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN THE LAND OF A  
THOUSAND HILLS



CELEBRATING 10  
YEARS OF THE  
RWANDA COURSE &  
PROFESSOR HENRI  
BOVI

ONLINE PRESENTATION  
& PANEL DISCUSSION  
JAN 14, 2021, 7-8:30 PM

SATELLITE PROJECT  
SPACE JAN 7-16, 2021  
121 DUNDAS ST.,  
LONDON, ON